



The New Bostonian

...Strengthening the ability of residents from diverse cultural and linguistic communities to play an active role in the economic, civic, and cultural life of the City of Boston
Winter 2006-07



Thomas M. Menino, Mayor

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We are Boston: 2006

The driving beat of African drums, signifying the start of the We Are Boston 2006 event, drew the diverse crowd from the different continents into the banquet hall.

"You could travel across this nation and you will not find in any city in the country, the kind of dinner that we are having this evening, that celebrates the diversity and bring people together proud of their heritage, proud of their background and making this the most vibrant city in the area."

Senator Kennedy

On October 10th, 2006, Mayor Thomas M. Menino and the Office of New Bostonians, together with over 60 community partners, honored Senator Kennedy with the 2006 New Bostonians Leadership Award in recognition of his tireless and inspiring leadership at the first "We Are Boston 2006" event held at the Boston Convention Center.

The "We are Boston" event affirmed the city's immigrant heritage, acknowledged the contributions of immigrants, and celebrated all of Boston's rich ethnic diversity in an evening of colorful multicultural performances and multiethnic cuisine.

The celebration drew out the connections between different waves and different groups of New Bostonians, those who came freely and those who were brought here against their will. New and old Bostonians alike came together to affirm and take pride in their diverse immigrant roots and history, and celebrated the diverse talents and the remarkable role that immigrants have played in enriching the city.

In addition to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Mayor Menino recognized individuals and organizations that have worked effectively and consistently to embrace diversity and empower New Bostonians towards full participation in the life of

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Mayor Menino's Column

In 1998, I established the Office of New Bostonians (ONB) to assist diverse communities of Boston in fully participating in the life of the city and celebrating the contributions of our many immigrants. Diversity is the strength of our city and Boston benefits greatly from everything our new Bostonians have to offer. Today, ONB is recognized nationally as a model for helping newcomers connect with city government and all it has to offer. I am extremely proud of the accomplishments that ONB has made in the past years, especially in its diligent efforts to establish strong, collaborative partnerships with diverse communities and in providing quality services to our newcomers.



This year, I was proud to host the First Annual "We Are Boston: 2006" with ONB and over 60 community partners. Together we recognized and honored Boston's diverse cultural history and took time to acknowledge individuals who have made significant contributions in embracing Boston's diversity. More than 800 people representing the many different cultures of the City of Boston attended the first annual event where Boston's diversity was showcased with multicultural cuisine and performances. Senator Edward M. Kennedy was honored with the Leadership Award for his tireless and inspiring leadership. Other outstanding individuals and organizations were also recognized.

My Office of New Bostonians continues its innovative public-private-community partnership. The English for New Bostonians program, aimed at creating opportunities for immigrants to learn English is a good example. English for New Bostonians announced two-year grants to 17 established ESOL programs, which will reach hundreds in Boston who want to learn English.

My Office of New Bostonians continues to assist the growing and changing immigrant and newcomer communities in Boston and improve the ability of these diverse communities to access city services.

Boston City Hall Cultural Awareness Series

With topics ranging from “The Heritage of African-American Quilting”, “The Underground Railroad”, “Italian Feasts in America”, to “The Roots of an Armenian-American”, and “Islam and the Arab World” the Mayor’s Office of New Bostonians (MONB), in collaboration with other city departments, brought a series of cultural presentations to city hall employees, better known as Cultural Awareness Series (CAS). The CAS were implemented in 2004, with the purpose of appreciating each other's cultural heritage, and better serving our diverse constituents.

The goal of the monthly one-hour presentation (15-30 presentation with 30 minutes of Q & A) is to increase the sense of community and teamwork by understanding the diverse communities, and sharing aspects of the cultural heritages (27 different cultures) represented in city hall such as languages, music, customs, food, folklore, literature and artifacts.

If you have any suggestions or would like to be part of the organization committee, please e-mail armando.silva@cityofboston.gov or call him at: 617-635-1961



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the City. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts was presented with the Corporate Leadership award. Mark Cosmo, Chief Financial Officer for the Mentor Group and active leader in the Albanian Community won the Individual Achievement award, Diane Portnoy, Director of the Immigrant Learning Center was awarded the Community Leadership Award and Carlos Saavedra was presented with the Youth Leadership award for his leadership on the in-state tuition bill.

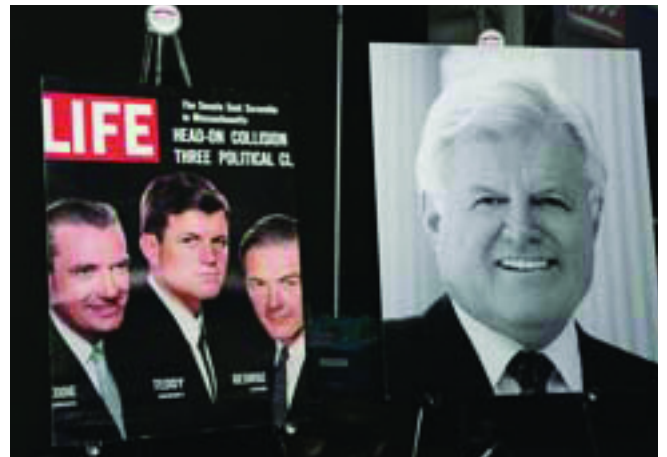
Descriptions of the evening included,

“Amazing”, “inspiring”, “empowering”, “substantive”, “outstanding”, “stunning”, “elegant”, “interesting program”, “great food”, “great networking” “Everyone you would want to meet is there”

Approximately 800 people attended the event.

Reverend Cheng Imm Tan emceed the event together with co-chairs of the event, Jim Rooney (Lead Sponsor), Dr. Joseph Aoun, Jackie Jenkins Scott, and Vanessa Calderon Rosado.

Boston has always been a destination of immigrants, with one in six people in the country tracing their ancestor's arrival through the port of Boston. The drive and the dreams of New Bostonians, new and old, have been and will continue to be the key to Boston's prosperity and success.



MONB IMMIGRATION CLINICS

Since Mayor Thomas M. Menino started the "immigration advice" program at City Hall in 2004, more than 800 people have been able to get answers to their immigration questions from volunteer immigration lawyers.

From Africa to North America, people sought legal advice on a wide range of immigration issues. They came from all walks of life, with gender, and race almost equally divided. The issues that clients wanted to discuss focused mainly on residency issues.

The majority of the lawyers are members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association of Massachusetts (AILA). Most of them are in private practice and many speak another language other than English (Arabic, Farsi, French, Spanish, Portuguese).

The clinics are offered on every first and third Wednesday of each month from 12:00 noon to 2:30 PM. All sessions are private and confidential. Each session usually last from 15 to 45 minutes, depending on the case.

Although the immigration advice program is set up to be held in City Hall, with enough notice, the lawyers are willing to go to the neighborhoods as well.

If you are interested in hosting an immigration clinic in your neighborhood or for more information on the free immigration advice program offered at City Hall, please contact James R. Colimon @ 617-635-1962 or send him an e-mail at the following address: james.colimon@cityofboston.gov

OFFICE OF NEW BOSTONIANS CELEBRATES 7th ANNUAL COMMUNITY DAY

The 7th Annual New Bostonian Community Day took place on September 20, 2006 at Boston City Hall. Throughout the day there were great performances by a variety of musicians and dancers from different countries. In addition, there were resource tables on topics ranging from educational resources to job opportunities, free immigration clinics, and health issues. Multilingual tours of city hall were also conducted to familiarize participants with city hall.



Boston's first Lady Mrs. Angela Menino welcomed newcomers to the City of Boston, promising that they would have the same opportunities as people before them. Mayor Menino once said "I am so proud of everything we are doing to reach out to our immigrants or our new Bostonians, if we work together, we will build a stronger and better Boston," he said.

Browsing through resource tables. *"This is a wonderful celebration," said one attendee. "This is outstanding we should do it more often,"* said another one. The day celebrations concluded at 4:00 pm.

Instead of the New Bostonians Community Evening Reception which recognized outstanding New Bostonians in past years, this year, MONB celebrated New Bostonian's contributions and leadership in the first We Are Boston event held at the Boston Convention Center. If you were unable to join us this year for the We Are Boston event, be sure to join us at this empowering and inspiring event next year.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Do you know you can claim up to \$5,216 in Earned Income Tax Credit?

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families that allow you to claim up to a maximum of \$4,536. There is also a companion state EITC, which provides a refundable 15% of the federal credit up to a maximum of \$680. In order to qualify for the EITC, an individual or family must meet the following income criteria.

If single:

- \$36,348 or less with more than 1 qualifying child
- \$32,001 or less with 1 qualifying child
- \$12,120 or less with no qualifying children

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If married, filing jointly:

- \$38,348 or less with more than 1 qualifying child
- \$34,001 or less with 1 qualifying child
- \$14,120 or less with no qualifying children



Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Boston Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign has set up many free tax sites in your neighborhood where you can get your taxes done and have access to the earned income tax credit. You can also review your credit report, open a bank or credit union account and screen for public benefits. For further information please visit the website www.bostontaxhelp.org, or contact the Boston EITC Campaign hotline at 617-918-5275.

New Bostonians Survey and Summit

Since its inception, the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians (MONB), has worked closely with the diverse immigrant communities to identify and address key issues facing the diverse communities.

To ensure that we are still addressing relevant issues in the communities and to assess MONB's effectiveness and role with the diverse communities, MONB sent out a 72-question electronic survey to community partners, leaders and individuals this past summer.

Survey Results.

Survey Respondents: Over 15.5% of the 800 people who received the electronic survey filled out the survey. 75% were community organizations who served a diversity of New Bostonians communities and 25% were individuals.

Issues Affecting New Bostonians: Most respondents picked ESOL, Jobs, immigration laws, access to city services, health care and education as the most important issues facing New Bostonians.

Issues affecting New Bostonians	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Need information and access to City Services	100 (%79.36)	26 (%20.63)	0 (0)
Need more ESOL classes	109 (%88)	13 (%10.40)	2 (%1.60)
Inf. on immig. laws and rel. with authorities	100 (%80.16)	23 (%19.05)	1 (%0.79)
Rise in backlash and increasing discrimination	64 (%51.02)	52 (%41.60)	9 (%7.20)
Training, retraining and obtaining jobs	100 (%80.00)	30 (%19.20)	1 (%0.80)
Inv Parents in children's ed and cult competent sch environ.	91 (%73.39)	30 (%24.19)	1 (%0.81)
Access, underst and navigating health care	95 (%75.39)	31 (%24.61)	0 (%0)
Lack of youth programs	69 (%58.19)	47 (%38.52)	4 (%3.27)
Need assistance to become citizens	65 (%53.65)	52 (%42.27)	4 (%3.25)
Civic participation and voting	52 (%62.40)	27 (%36.00)	1 (%0.80)
Housing	76 (%63.93)	44 (%36.09)	0 (%0)
Violence-gun violence, and domestic violence	82 (%68.85)	34 (%27.86)	4 (%3.27)

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Three Key issues: When respondents were asked to prioritize the three most important issues, ESOL immigration laws and job emerged most frequently cited as the issue of primary importance.

Issues	Primary Importance	Secondary Importance	Tertiary Importance	Total
City Service Info.	10	7	7	24
ESOL	46	17	10	73
Immigration Laws	14	11	11	36
Discrimination	2	6	3	11
Jobs	13	26	14	53
Education	6	11	8	25
Healthcare	5	13	17	35
Youth Programming	5	6	8	19
Naturalization	2	5	5	12
Civic Participation	2	4	5	11
Housing	5	11	21	37
Violence	5			
Other	7	2	3	12

Three Key issues by the Cardinal method. When the issues were scored by the cardinal method, (each issue is weighted 3 points if its of primary importance, 2 points if secondary and 1 point if tertiary, and then all the points are totaled), ESOL and jobs emerged as the two most important issues followed by housing, immigration laws and education in third place.

Evaluating MONB's Role

MONB's role in bringing attention to key issues (85%) facing New Bostonians was most useful to respondents. Facilitating access to community services and updates on immigration law (both 69%) was second in importance followed by MONB's efforts to increase access to city services and civic participation (68% and 69% respectively).

Over 90% of respondents saw MONB's role primarily as a catalyst. They would like to see MONB facilitate collaborations to address key issues that affect New Bostonians and to facilitate relationships with businesses and funders. Nearly 83% would like MONB to provide technical assistance, especially in the area of organizational capacity building and fundraising as well as leadership and program development.

Evaluating MONB programs.

MONB programs and materials that received the highest marks were:
The English For New Bostonians initiative (86%),
Guide to City Services (82%)
Demographic Report (81%),
Community resource directory (77%)
Immigration clinics (75%) and
Simultaneous interpreter equipment (73%) and the city interpreter pool (70%).

New Initiatives.

Updated Website. Respondents were enthusiastic about an updated, more user friendly MONB website and the New Bostonians Summit.

New Bostonians Summit. To better address issues facing New Bostonian communities, the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians is proposing to facilitate a New Bostonians Summit in 2007. The goal of the Summit is to assemble key players from six sectors - immigrant leadership, mainstream community partners, university experts, city officials, funders, and the business community - to bring attention and significant additional resources to address and advance three key issues facing the immigrant communities of Boston:

The top issues picked by survey respondents to be addressed in the summit are: 1) access to quality English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, 2) jobs (training and workforce development) and 3) education (building capacity for parental involvement to close the achievement gap for immigrant students in Boston Public Schools and system improvement).

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Together, stakeholders will develop effective plans and strategies at pre-summit meetings to alleviate barriers and move these issues forward. The detailed plan of action will be presented to the Mayor and the communities at large at the Summit.

Goals of Summit

- Bring attention and resources to the key issues facing immigrant communities
- Facilitate agreement and develop concrete strategies and plans to move key issues forward
- Develop a structure for key players from diverse immigrant communities to work together with players from other sectors who are working on the same issues
- Facilitate a structure of accountability and reporting to the community on progress made on annual/regular basis

Components of Summit

- Identify and bring together key players from the 6 sectors, the New Bostonian Communities, main stream communities working on the three key issues with Funders, businesses, universities and city government who are invested in these issues.
- Identify and review research that has been done in these three key issues. Convene key leaders from the 6 sectors to develop effective plans and strategies that the group can execute to alleviate barriers and move these issues forward in pre-summit meetings.
- Present detailed plan of action to the Mayor and the communities at the Summit.
- Annual progress reports to be measured against standards and quantifiable goals set by the group.

For more information about the MONB survey and New Bostonians Summit, please contact MONB at 617-635-2980.



Additional Information

MONB Latest Staff Addition...

Agnes Chang is joining the MONB in the start of the new year as the Resource Development Manager after five years at the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence. In her new position, Agnes will be responsible for looking for appropriate sources of funding, writing the annual Newsletter and the Annual Report, and will assist with the summit. Agnes is originally from Hong Kong and has been a resident of Boston for over twenty years. She is proficient in Cantonese, Shanghaiese and Mandarin.

Save The Date

Thursday, March 8th, 2007

Celebrate International Woman's Day

10th Annual 2007 International Woman's Day Breakfast

Topic: Creating Equality in Woman's Health

7:30 - 9:30 AM

Simmons College, 300 the Fenway, Boston

For more information, please contact Diane Hammer at diane.hammer@simmons.edu

The New Bostonian
is a publication of the
Mayor's Office of New Bostonians
Boston City Hall, Room 803
Boston, MA 02201

Telephone: 011-617-635-2980

Fax: 011-617-635-4540

<http://www.cityofboston.gov/newbostonians>

MONB STAFF:

Reverend Cheng Imm Tan, Director

Agnes Chang, Resource Development Manager

Mayra Canetti, Executive Assistant

James Reginald Colimon, Public Relations/Community Outreach Coordinator

Armando Jorge Silva, Constituent Advocacy Coordinator